

Partnership

In October 2000, the National Park Service Rivers, Trails and Conservation Assistance Program (RTCA) and the American Society of Landscape Architects (ASLA) formalized, through a Memorandum of Understanding, a partnership to help communities across the nation plan, design, and manage their natural, cultural, and recreation resources."

RTCA is a partnership program of the National Park Service (NPS) with offices throughout the country. RTCA staff work with community groups and local, state and other federal programs to conserve rivers, preserve open space, and develop trails and greenways. The program helps local coalitions develop concept plans, build partnerships to achieve community-set goals, engage the public's imagination, and identify potential sources of funding. All RTCA projects are results-oriented, with an emphasis on community initiative, cost-sharing, and cooperation.

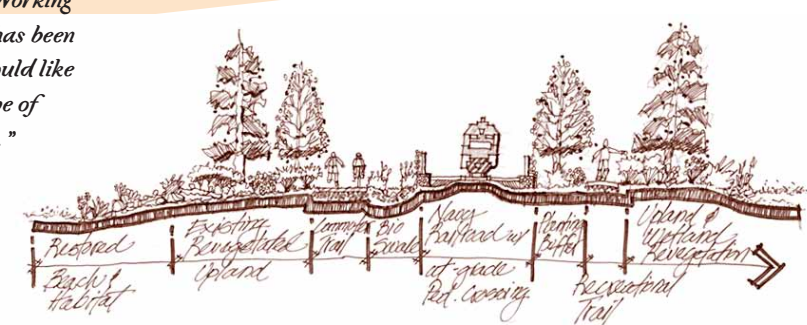
The mission of the American Society of Landscape Architects is to lead, to educate and to participate in the careful stewardship, wise planning and artful design of our cultural and natural environments. Landscape architects strive to realize a balance among preservation, use and management of the country's resources. Members of ASLA volunteer their skills, individually and as part of the organization's community stewardship programs, to many projects throughout the nation, such as neighborhood playgrounds and gardens, Habitat for Humanity, and environmental education.

The NPS/ASLA partnership provides landscape architects with opportunities to work with communities and raise public awareness about their profession through pro bono technical assistance on RTCA conservation and recreation projects. In turn, RTCA is able to sponsor professional design expertise otherwise unavailable or unaffordable in these community-based efforts.

Transforming the national partnership agreement into regional action, ASLA chapters across the country joined forces with RTCA program offices for ten partnership projects in eight states in the last three years. In its first decade, the partnership assisted more than thirty community projects, and both organizations look forward to many more successful collaborations.

"This has been a very fulfilling experience. Working with the RTCA folks has been absolutely great. I would like to see more of this type of collaboration going on."

Paul Clinton, ASLA
Great Plains Chapter



Sinclair Inlet Trail, WA

"That was awesome; the illustrations really helped our group visualize the potential of Beacon Hill. I have a new appreciation for the landscape architecture field."

Heleen Dewey,
Spokane Regional
Health District

For more information please contact:

Alexandra Stone National Park Service Rivers, Trails and Conservation Assistance Program 206/220-4108 alex_stone@nps.gov www.nps.gov/rtca	Julia Lent Director, Government Affairs American Society of Landscape Architects 202/216-2330 jlent@asla.org www.asla.org
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2008 - 2010

Community Assistance Partnerships



National Park Service
Rivers, Trails & Conservation
Assistance Program

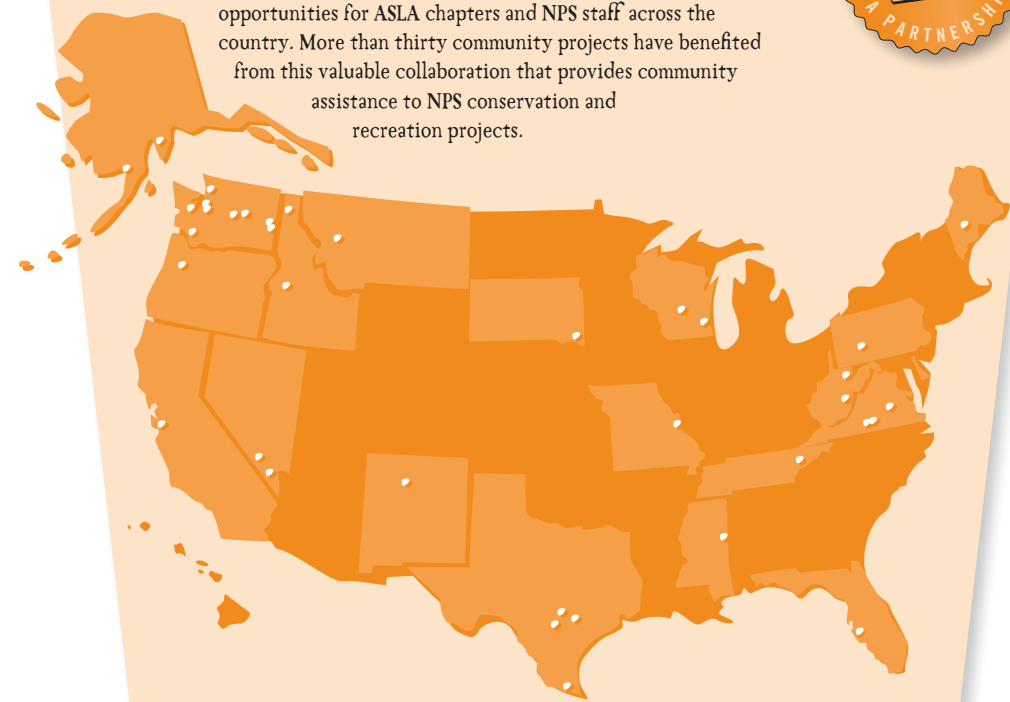


American Society of
Landscape Architects

south dakota
virginia
alaska
maine
idaho
nevada
washington
new mexico

NPS & ASLA Celebrate a Decade of Partnership

This unique partnership was first tested in the Pacific Northwest and led to a national agreement in 2000 which expanded opportunities for ASLA chapters and NPS staff across the country. More than thirty community projects have benefited from this valuable collaboration that provides community assistance to NPS conservation and recreation projects.



Produced by the National Park Service Rivers, Trails and Conservation Assistance Program (RTCA). Brochure design by Dan Gilchrist Design. Photos courtesy of RTCA except where individually credited. Printed on recycled paper.

"This was about the coolest thing I've ever been a part of!"

Jay Baker, high school student, Sagle, ID

Community Assistance

Neighborhoods, small towns, and community groups sometimes face planning or design challenges they are unable to meet due to a lack of expertise, funding, personnel, or other resources. The partnership between NPS and ASLA chapters addresses these challenges and assists communities by pairing the organizational and planning skills of NPS planners with the technical design skills of ASLA landscape architects.

One of the most effective vehicles for producing ideas with limited time and resources is the *design charrette*. A charrette is typically an intensive, illustrated brainstorming session that involves any number of people and lasts from a few hours to a few days. The tradition dates from



Pend d'Oreille Bay Trail, ID

"The charrette experience was a great reminder that insightful designs can be produced in a short amount of time."

Margaret Chang
MLA Student, University of Washington

the 19th Century at the Ecole des Beaux Arts, in Paris, where professors would send a cart (charrette) around to pick up students' work at the submission dead-line. Some students, frantic to complete their drawings, would jump on the cart as it rolled down the street, hence, working *"en charrette."*

In preparation for a community design charrette, RTCA staff works with project partners to organize the event and define the goals for generating design ideas and potential solutions for their recreation or conservation project. During the charrette, ASLA members and allied design professionals are teamed with local citizens and subject matter experts. Working together, they quickly address project challenges and craft visual design solutions. The objective is high creativity and productivity. No ideas are discarded due to impracticality or questionable

details. These are decisions for the community to make later, after the design professionals have returned home, and ideas are moved forward from within the community.

The image of frantic, last minute drawing (sometimes described as "organized chaos") is still characteristic at charrettes today, particularly since participants typically present the ideas they generate during the charrette at a public forum of some kind. It is here, at this final charrette wrap-up, where the synergy of the work between outside professionals and local citizens is highlighted and handed-off to the larger community.

"In many rural communities resources are very limited for planning public river access and trails, and having the [NPS/ASLA] assistance has been invaluable. The plan has shown residents and businesses what is possible in a way that moved this project quicker than we anticipated in the beginning."

Jonathan P. LaBonté, Executive Director
Androscooggin Land Trust



Last Chance Park, NV

"I can't say enough about how valuable working with NPS and ASLA was to the community and myself — I had been interested in landscape architecture and now this fall will be pursuing a LA degree."

Susan Kovalchuk, high school student, Sandpoint, ID

"I'm always amazed at the resources RTCA can bring to a project. NM-ASLA and the UNM landscape architecture students really enhanced our workshop. The drawings created by the LA's helped us see the ideas and concepts being discussed."

Anna Schulte, Step Into Cuba Alliance

Naknek Sockeye Run Fitness Trail & Bike Path *Alaska 2009*

In Naknek — a gateway community to Katmai National Park and Preserve — there are no maintained trails. In 2009, Isabel Babiak (pictured), then 8 years old, decided to change that by proposing the 2-mile Sockeye Run Bike Path and Fitness Trail, with interpretive signs created by local students. The community rallied behind the proposal, and offers of pro-bono labor, equipment, and financial support poured in from many local, state and federal partners. The trail will provide a safe route to school for local children, a place for all community members to engage in physical activities, and benefit the thousands of visitors who travel to, and work in, the region each summer.

To kick-off the project and capture the trail vision, a community workshop was hosted in Naknek by the Bristol Bay Borough and School District, Alaska's Safe Routes to Schools Program, RTCA and the Alaska Chapter ASLA. Over 60 people came to the workshop, including students of all ages.

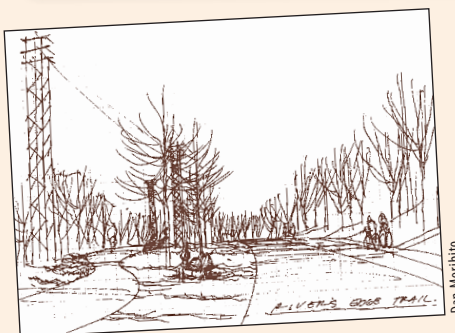
RESULTS: Community members joined together to find grants, host in-service teacher interpretive sign training, and flag a trail alignment. Alaska State Parks is helping students design the interpretive signs. Alaska Film Services is documenting the project and teaching youth multi-media video skills. An ASLA volunteer developed drawings for the trail, with land ownership, right-of-way, and easement information, which have been critical in obtaining additional financial and political support, as well as permits. Ribbon cutting for the trail is expected in Spring 2011.



Chisolm Trails *Maine 2010*

Through the NPS partnership with ASLA, three members of the Maine Chapter teamed up with RTCA to help connect two historic mill towns, Livermore Falls and Jay, with a trail. The vision is a three-mile trail to connect the middle and high schools to each other and to the Androscoggin River, downtown, and the former paper mill. From the initial site visit, the team focused on a downtown trail hub and the mill property. Pivotal in the project is the active participation of the visionary new mill owners who will redevelop the sprawling and complex property, and who foresee great benefits from a trail through the historic site. The team worked closely with the Chisholm Trails committee and publicly unveiled their ideas at an open house: a conceptual layout and design of the trail through the mill property, ideas for public spaces around the mill buildings, and a two-phased site plan for connecting Livermore Fall's downtown to the river trail and performance gazebo.

RESULTS: The NPS/ASLA assistance provided inspiration and materials that are advancing the planning and implementation of trails and downtown connections.



Don Morihito

2008 - 2010



James River Branch Rail-Trail

Virginia 2009-2010

Richmond's 9th District councilman discovered a ribbon of green in a vast ocean of asphalt and concrete: an inactive rail-road right-of-way in Southside Richmond. He convened a committee to assess options for converting this to an urban greenway and trail. The committee worked in collaboration with RTCA, Virginia Chapter ASLA volunteers and adjacent neighborhoods to develop a vision and conceptual plan for the trail.

The plan illustrates the vision for the James River Branch (JRB) of a multi-use trail on the old right-of-way, and opportunities to connect neighborhoods, schools, businesses, parks, and community facilities. It also highlights challenges and provides recommendations on next steps and resources available to resolve trail development issues.

RESULTS: Since completion of the plan, the "Friends of JRB" has been established to assist with partnership development and outreach; and a documentary of the JRB was aired by *Virginia Currents*, a local public television program. To oversee development of the JRB as well as other trail and greenway initiatives, the Mayor of Richmond established the Richmond Pedestrian, Bicycling and Trails Planning Commission.

Last Chance Park

Nevada 2009

Due to explosive growth in the last decade in the town of Pahrump, Nevada, residents identified a need to protect Last Chance Park, a rugged landscape providing open space, recreation and habitat for bighorn sheep and other wildlife. A coalition of agency and community members were awarded a grant of technical assistance from the RTCA program to orchestrate a workshop to help design a sustainable plan for this 1600-acre Bureau of Land Management parcel.

Prior to the workshop, RTCA partnered with the Nevada Chapter ASLA to engage area youth and help celebrate National Landscape Architecture month in April. Youth provided input on the park vision and needs, including desired trails and amenities, through an interactive mapping exercise. ASLA supported two community open houses through facilitation of small group activities to identify needs, desires, issues and preferred site locations. After these events, ASLA representatives and RTCA staff came together to design concept plans for three 10-acre access points including parking, recreational opportunities and trails; define areas for natural resource protection and enhancement; and identify interpretive and educational amenities. Additionally, the team developed a restoration plan and strategies for implementation, funding, and long-term recreation planning of the larger study area.

RESULTS: Conceptual plans have been submitted to the BLM for approval. Inspired by the innovative designs and community enthusiasm, the Town of Pahrump obligated \$35,000 toward park development. The BLM has posted signs and improved coordination with BLM rangers working with Pahrump police to monitor vandalism and dumping.

Sinclair Inlet Trail

Washington 2009

Sinclair Inlet is a bay of Puget Sound, southeast of Bremerton, Washington. Along the north shoreline is a Navy-owned rail right-of-way and a major state highway. Because of the public ownerships the Kitsap Trees and Shoreline Association (KiTSA) saw a significant opportunity to address water quality and public access issues in this corridor, and they promoted the potential for a "salmon friendly" shoreline as well as a bicycle/pedestrian trail.

Working with Washington State Chapter ASLA, a charrette was held, teaming community members and agency staff with volunteer landscape architects to explore design ideas for shoreline restoration, surface water management, a public trail, and education. After a common framework was established for the master plan, each team worked independently to develop detailed ideas and sketches. A public open house was held to conclude the charrette. Unofficial 'sticky-dot voting' showed strong support for pedestrian access to the bay and a safe bicycle route through this corridor.

RESULTS: A trails committee—convened by the Kitsap Regional Coordinating Council (KRCC) to submit a report about how to best use non-motorized funds in the 2011 federal transportation enhancements program—included results from the charrette in their final report. Also, the Puget Sound Naval Shipyard submitted a letter to the KRCC offering formal support for the trail and assigned a full-time engineer to develop alignment details and coordinate with adjacent jurisdictions.

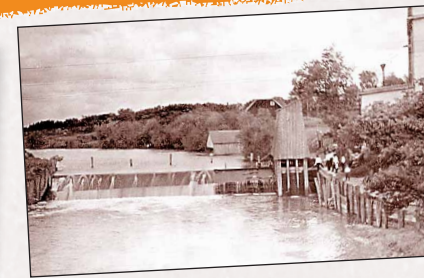
Camp Kushtaka Redevelopment

Alaska 2008

"Wow, what a beautiful site!" "It brings back such great memories of when I was a kid in camp!" These were some of the comments from a group of landscape architects, planners, surveyors, trail designers, and others gathered one summer Saturday at Camp Fire USA Alaska Council's Camp Kushtaka on the shores of Kenai Lake in Cooper Landing. The group was gathered for a design charrette to determine how best to enhance Camp Kushtaka's outdoor recreation opportunities as part of a greater camp redevelopment effort. RTCA organized and led the charrette in partnership with Camp Fire USA and the Alaska Chapter ASLA.

RESULTS: The creative energy put forth during the charrette culminated in a report and conceptual site plan that graphically presented a number of potential new or expanded outdoor recreation activities and facilities for the 157-acre camp, including a new trail system designed to support differing camper skill levels and modes of travel. As a bonus, the ASLA chapter volunteers also provided specific technical design recommendations for one of the trails. As the Council moves forward with redevelopment, they benefit from the ideas of those who came to the Camp Kushtaka charrette and not only relived their own camp memories, but designed an outdoor experience that would make many new and wonderful memories for future campers.

Community Assistance Partnerships



City of Centerville

Centerville Trails *South Dakota 2008*

Centerville, South Dakota, is a small community with big dreams. Early in the 1900s, Centerville had a beautiful beach and a state-of-the-art flour mill on the Vermillion River. But all things change with time. The river was "improved," the beach fell into disrepair, the historic mill was abandoned and portions were demolished. The economic development director saw and promoted the benefits of revitalizing and connecting these local landmarks. RTCA made an analysis of the community, and working with a Great Plains Chapter ASLA volunteer, produced a conceptual trail plan that also looked at the challenges of land acquisition and highway crossings and bridges. The Centerville Trails Committee was enthused and was ready to proceed with funding.

RESULTS: In the process, the RTCA/ASLA team pointed out that Centerville students had few safe routes for walking or biking to school and encouraged the town to pursue federal Safe Routes to School (SRTS) funding. The committee recognized the immediate opportunity and shifted priorities to focus on creating a network of sidewalks to the schools. The town won a \$203,000 SRTS grant. And everyone's holding on to the dream that soon there will be a path connecting the townspeople with the incredible Vermillion River.

Beacon Hill Trails

Washington 2009

Beacon Hill is one of the last undeveloped ridgelines in the Spokane area. The area was depicted as "Upriver Park" in the 1908 Olmsted brothers "System of Parks and Parkways" plan. However, today only 40% is in public ownership. Beacon Hill was well known among mountain bikers yet there were unresolved issues including unintentional trespass and illegal activities. The Fat Tire Trail Riders' Club (FTTRC) saw Beacon Hill as a valuable resource and wanted to formalize a trail system to complement new residential development. FTTRC catalyzed the planning process by winning assistance from RTCA. The Washington State and Idaho-Montana ASLA chapters volunteered members and financial resources for a charrette. Teams tackled trailhead design; recreation; education; management; and community connections. The workshop broadened community involvement with new stakeholders brought together. The concepts quickly expanded from a focus on mountain biking to a regional multi-use destination.



RESULTS: The charrette helped build relationships among landowners, neighbors, agencies, and law enforcement officials who are now working together to implement the concept plan for the 20-mile trail system and solve on-going issues. To raise awareness of the project, clean-ups were organized that removed over 30 abandoned cars. Kiosks have been installed, and proceeds from a new trail guide fund re-prints and trail work. Ten landowners collaborated on proposals to sell land for public park uses which could add 327 acres for generations to enjoy.

Pend d'Oreille Bay Trail *Idaho 2009*

Lake Pend Oreille, in the Idaho Panhandle, is one of the largest inland lakes in North America. However, even with over 100 miles of shoreline there is very limited public access to its edge. A section along the northwest shoreline functions as a trail thanks to the generous temporary permission of private property owners.

Following decades of effort to plan and acquire land for a public trail, partners — public and private — reassembled as the "Friends of the Pend d'Oreille Bay Trail" to represent the community's interests in a 2-mile greenway, generally paralleling the shoreline, to connect Sandpoint, Ponderay and Kootenai as well as provide safe public access to Pend d'Oreille Bay. The mixed ownership and activities in the corridor, including an active rail line, a brownfield assessment, and potential future private commercial and residential development, added complexity to the project.

NPS offered the Friends support, and with the Idaho-Montana Chapter ASLA and Idaho DEQ co-sponsored a charrette in the tri-city area. Volunteer landscape architects led five multi-disciplinary teams addressing regional connectivity, varying mixes of private/public development, and educational opportunities.

RESULTS: The charrette brought everyone involved together to share ideas and explore alternatives. Only nine months after the charrette, a trail concept plan was adopted by the three cities and the county.



Idaho Conservation League